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THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MÉXICO

1833 - 1910

HISTORICAL ESSAY

BY

LUIS GONZÁLEZ OBREGÓN

TRANSLATED BY

ALBERTO M. CARREÑO

MÉXICO, 1910

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The majority of educated foreigners who visit the National Library, as also our countrymen from the different States of the Republic who as a rule pay it a visit when they come up to the Capital, are not satisfied with listening to the verbal explanations offered by the officers of the Establishment, but express the desire, and quite naturally, to be supplied with printed details about the history of the Library and all that concerns same. Up till now they have been distributing copies, nearly out of print, of the pamphlet published in 1884 by the late Director D. José María Vigil, when the Library was inaugurated, a pamphlet in which are compiled, with all the mastery of the subject commanded by the author, the details most worthy of being known; but after a quarter of a century, these details are becoming deficient, and consequently the necessity of amplifying them and of bringing them up to date has been generally felt.

Considering the matter in this light, I entrusted Don Luis González Obregón with the compilation of a compendiated history of the Library, and this gentleman, with the success natural in one who has known how to gain an honourable name in our national world of letters, has finished his labours.

In the pages which make up this well documented work of Señor González Obregón, nothing superfluous and nothing to distract one's attention from the subject is to be found.

The book does not require a prologue or preface of any kind, and if these lines figure at the beginning of the work, it is solely because I wish to state the reasons I had for not publishing a second edition of the above mentioned report by Señor Vigil, and because I wished to present in another form the complete history of the Establishment, the management of which the President of the Republic did the honour to confer upon me.

Francisco Sosa.

México, D. F. January 1910.

I

The notable thinker and writer, Dr. José María Luis Mora, who by appointment made by the illustrious Vice-President of the Republic Mr. Valentín Gómez Farías, prepared together with Messrs. Manuel Eduardo Gorostiza, Bernardo Couto, Andrés Quintana Roo and Juan Rodríguez Puebla, the laws and regulations for Public Instruction in the Federal District, was the first to conceive the idea of establishing a National Library in the City of México.

Among the important dispositions taken to put into effect this project, may be mentioned the decree of October 24th, 1833, published on the 26th of the same month and year, and embodied in the Regulations of Public Instruction dated June 2nd, 1834.

According to it, the National Library was to be established and maintained by the Ministry of Public Instruction, and the books

Dr. D. José María Luis Mora
Initiator of the National Library

which belonged to the Saints' College (Colegio de Santos) as well as to the University were to be used to found the Library, and its location was to be the building occupied formerly by the latter College.

Three thousand pesos from the Public Instruction's fund, when spared from the normal expenses, were annually assigned to purchase all of the books that, in the judgement of the Direction, might be more useful, as well as to pay newspaper subscriptions and other writings selected by the Direction. All the volumes were to bear the Library's seal. Moreover, the names of the donors should be inscribed in the books given by them as well as in the records of the Establishment, and the Director was to publish a list of them in the Official newspaper. The books and manuscripts, as soon as they be purchased or received were to be classified according to subjects, numbered and appraised by experts, and four indexes formed: an alphabetic one with the name of the authors, another of subjects, the third regarding their location in the rooms and bookcases, and the last, containing the number and value of each book or manuscript These indexes were to be renewed every three years so as to add to the acquisitions made during that period of time.

The indexes were to be in each reading room at the disposal of the public, who should be allowed to take all of the copies

and notes they might need and "the employees of the Library should give to the readers" all the assistance that they might render to them, on account of their learning and knowledge, so as to better direct their readings and investigations. The Library was to be opened daily from 9 o'clock A. M. to 1 o'clock P. M., and on feast days from 10 o'clock. No book nor manuscript would be taken out, under any circumstances, and this prohibition, as well as the notice regarding the office hours of the establishment were to be posted in the principal entrance. The staff of the Library was constituted as follows: a Librarian appointed by the Government charged with organizing, directing and managing said Library, with an annual fee of $ 2.000; an Assistant-Librarian with $ 800 per annum; three auxiliaries with $ 250; a servant and a porter whose salaries were to be paid by the Federal Treasury. The General Director of Public Instruction was to propose the candidates for said post. The Librarian's mail was not to be subjected to any postal charges. The Librarian was to propose the persons to be appointed as employees, advising the General Director of Public Instruction,

every three months as to the books and manuscripts to be acquired, presenting an estimate of expenses, a statement of the acquisitions either by purchase or donations, and whether the donors were private parties or purchasers; he was to render, at the end of each fiscal year the general accounts for examination and approval. He was empowered to exchange or sell all duplicate books with the previous authorization of the General Director of Public Instruction. A special commission appointed by said Director was to make a general inspection every eight months, and an inventory every year.

The principal points for the organization and regulations of the Library were established in the decree of which we have given an extract; but the liberal administration of Vice-President Valentín Gómez Farías went out of power and with it any hope of the realization of Dr. Mora and his colleagues' idea.

II

The second attempt to establish the National Library was made in 1846. A new decree was issued on November 30th, undoubtedly at the request of Mr. José María Lafragua, Secretary of Foreign Relations, by General José María Salas, then in charge of the Executive Power, and was published on December 1st. of the same year.

The decree was preceded by a preamble stating "that there was nothing more desirable in a country governed by liberal institutions than to facilitate and increase those establishments whereby the people could acquire and perfect their instruction without difficulty", that "a full knowledge of citizens'

duties is the most powerful guarantee for assuring liberty and public order" and that "this knowledge is easily obtained through the reading of useful books kept in public

Lic. D. José María Lafragua
First Director of the National Library

libraries to which every one has access"; that "these establishments offer great advantages to those people who, having some time to dispose of, are willing to employ it in self instruction" and that "the Capital of the Republic urgently needed the establishment of a library which would honor its culture".

The provisions of the decree were:

1st. To establish a national and public library in the City of Mexico.

2nd. To form said library with the following:

I.—The books and manuscripts of the defunct Saints' College, which then existed at San Ildefonso College;

II.—The books belonging to the Department of Foreign Relations, not referring to subjects connected with the public administration;

III.—The duplicate copies kept in other public libraries, or in the religious convents, with the consent of the owners;

IV.—Private donations;

V.—The works that might be purchased in the Republic and abroad, with funds devoted to that purpose.

The decree of 1846 provided, furthermore, that a copy should be sent to the library of every book and newspaper published in the Federal District and territories, and the State Governors were invited to issue similar orders; that the Government should select a good place to establish the library and that it should appoint "the employees" it deemed

necessary, while the definite plant was organized, and the needed funds assigned for the maintainance of the library and the acquisitions of new books.

That a commission of three members appointed by the Government should suggest the place which was most suitable for the library, and write a draft of its regulations; visit the public libraries as well as those from the convents to select the duplicate books therein, and invite the Governors and other persons to make donations to the library.

The names of the donors should be inscribed in the donated books and in the records of the library, and published in the official newspaper. No book or manuscript could be taken out of the building, so as to avoid any possible loss.

A printing office should be established, the earnings of which were to be used for the benefit of both, library and printing office.

The second project in conection with a library in the Republic failed, owing to the difficulties which all efforts in the cause of progress and public welfare met during those days, the wretched foreign wars, and the sanguinary and fruitless struggle between

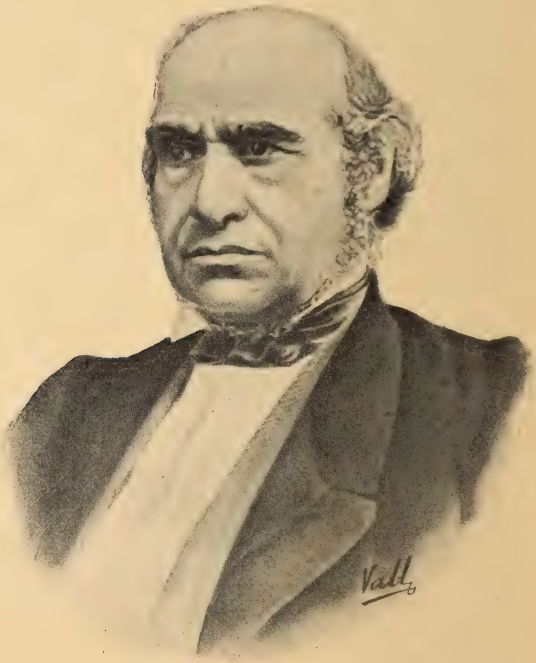
ambitious parties, which, trying to get into power, paid no attention to the intellectual advancement of the country and avoided the organization of the public treasury, without which no project can be carried out, whatever its importance may be.

III

In the year 1851, "El Siglo XIX" (The Nineteenth Century) a daily newspaper then published in the City of Mexico, urged the Government to fulfil the project conceived since 1833 for the establishment of a national library and suggested the custom House building, a large and very well located one, in Santo Domingo Square, as the most suitable for that purpose.

After having read this article, the eminent bibliographer, Judge José Fernando Ramírez, who lived at Durango, wrote a letter to Mr. José María Andrade, to present to the Government an initiative, which had it been adopted, perhaps the library could have been established since then in the aforesaid men-

tioned place, and it could have acquired a large number of valuable, excellent and rare



Lic. D. José Fernando Ramírez

Distinguished bibliophile and Government comptroller in the ex-University building of México for the arranging of the works taken from the extinguished religions convents.

works, and a large and valuable collection of manuscripts relating to our own history, which he had made up at great expense and

by patient research, and which he offered to the Government.

The following was his proposal:

That he should give the Government what he possessed in Durango, valued at about $ 16.000 and a very good library estimated by him at $ 20.000: a total amount of $ 36.000.

That, in exchange, the Government should give Mr. Ramírez an apartment in the Custom House, towards the Encarnation Street "big enough to live, independently from the rest of the building but adjoining the library". If the value of said apartment exceeded the one of the cesion made by Mr. Ramírez, he should be considered debtor for the balance, and pay the legal interest, he being at liberty to redeem the debt at will. If the balance should be in his favor, it would be paid to him in monthly instalments as small as Mr. Andrade deemed fit to arrange. Besides, the Government should transfer from Durango to México Mr. Ramírez' books and "appoint him librarian for life, with the fee assigned to the post", giving him the faculty of selecting his substitute under his responsibility and of appointing one employee. When the position

of the Museum preserver be vacant it should be incorporated together with its appropiation to the one of the librarian.

That during the first three years, M. Ramírez should give two thirds of his salary for the purchase of books, provided the Government would expend double that amount for the same purpose; the expenses to be made through Mr. Ramírez only and under his direction, he rendering account thereof.

The salaries of the library employees to be paid with the funds and by an office which might give enough assurances of paying.

Mr. Ramírez undertook to inspect free of charge, all works suitable for the library as well as all matters relating to it; the Government to contribute for the works to fit up Mr. Ramírez' house, who would pay for the materials and decoration. He finally proposed that his home at Durango should be used as a post office or tobacco administration.

Mr. Ramírez' private library and the works which it contained were as follows:

		Volumes
Religion and theological subjects. . . .		410
Public law, legislation, economy, etc.	800	
Roman, civil and canonical law .	1.498	2.298
Sciences, art and philosophy		361
Literature.		1.405
History, chronology, geography, travels.	1.554	
Ecclesiastical history	389	
History and documents regarding America	820	2.763
Pending classification		241
TOTAL AMOUNT. . .		7.478

Equitable or not, the propositions of Mr. Ramírez were not taken into consideration and some years after, his library, with no equal in its kind owing the large number of manuscripts and "prince" editions of México, was sold in London.

Mr. Ignacio Comonfort, while substitute President of the Republic, issued a new decree dated November 30th, 1856, trying once more to create the Library, and another decree on September 14th, 1857, officially published on the 21st., ordering the suppression of the University of México, and devoting the build-

ing, books, funds and other properties to the National Library.

In conection with this decree, the services of Mr. Fernando Ramírez, then Director of the Museum, were used, and the Rector of the suppressed University was notified to deliver him "under his personal responsibility" and under «a detailed inventory, the building, the library and all belonging to the University». Mr. Ramírez was appointed Director of the National Library to be there established, and he should have to prepare within a month the Library regulations, which had to be approved by the Government, and he should also have to consult all matters regarding its maintenance, enlargement and improvement.

It is worth remembering that article 4th. ordered all printers in the capital to contribute to the enlargement of the Library by sending two copies of each work published by them, under penalty of a fine from $ 25 to $ 50, which would go to increase the Library's fund. Had this order been strictly observed from that time, the establishment would have been enriched with national books and publications very scarce at present, or lost for ever.

The year 1857 may be considered as the one in which the Library was practically created, because, though it had not an appropiated building, nor was solemnly inaugurated owing to the terrible struggle that lasted three years in México, from that year the University was the centre where all the books which had been the property of the libraries of religious corporations and communities were gathered by virtue of the disentail and confiscation of ecclesiastical properties, Mr. Ramón Alcaraz first and later on Mr. José Fernando Ramírez having been appointed inspectors for that purpose by the Government.

IV

The liberal Government being victorious, and the capital of the Republic occupied by it from 1861 to 1863, the organization of the Library progressed, though slowly.

Mr. Benito Juárez issued the decree of December 24th, 1861, regarding the Library employees, who were as follows: an inspector without salary; a librarian at an annual fee of $ 1.500; an assistant librarian, $ 1.200; one clerk, $ 360; another at $ 240; two clerks for the handling of the books, $ 240 each; a hall porter $ 144 and a servant $ 96. Six thousand pesos were allowed for general expenses, maintenance of the library, purchase of books, subscription to European publications, binding of books, etc. and this amount was

to be increased by order of the Minister of Justice and Public Instruction, according to the needs of the establishment.

Mr. José Fernando Ramírez personally and with patient laboriousness and indefatigable care began arranging the different libraries of the suppressed convents. In addition to the library of the University's Doctors, all of the works belonging to the defunct communities had been gathered in the *general department,* so as to distribute them in the other departments. With this plan in view, the shelves that had been *La Profesa*'s property were placed in the hall known as the *Claustros;* the splendid shelves of Santo Domingo convent, together with its books, were located in the chapel, and so on the libraries of the other religious convents were put in different rooms of the same building.

The number of volumes gathered in the University's building and which formed the National Library up to the *Intervention* and the *Empire,* and their origin, were as follows:

	Volumes
From Santo Domingo convent	6.511
From Santo Domingo convent stolen and afterwards found by the police . . .	360
From La Profesa	5.020
From La Merced	3.071
From San Pablo	1.702
From San Agustín	6.744
From San Francisco	16.417
From San Diego	8.273
From San Fernando	9.500
From El Carmen (México, San Joaquín and San Angel convents)	18.111
From Porta Cœli	1.431
From Aranzazu	1.190
From the Department of Fomento (Improvements).	832
From the Department of Foreign Relations	435
From the Department of Justice. . . .	715
From the University.	10.652
TOTAL AMOUNT. . . .	90.964

The Library then began to regularly render its public services during the morning and the afternoon, predominating among its books those in relation with theology and ecclesiastical subjects, but there was no scarcity of scientific, historical and philosophical

works, specially those in conection with the history of México.

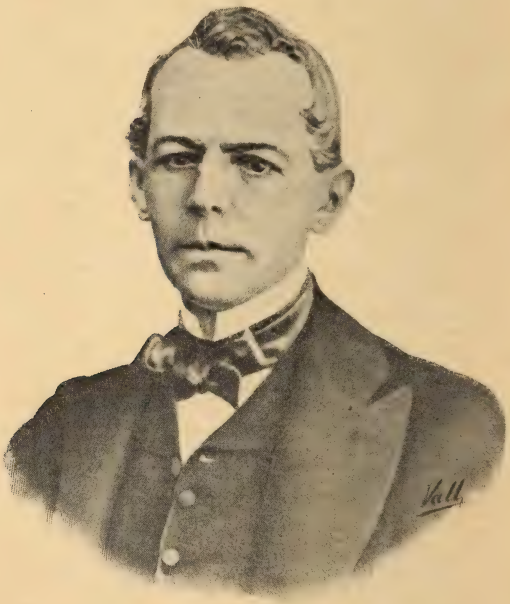
While Maximilian was in power, he designated Doctor José María Benítez as Director of the Library, but later on he appointed a foreigner. He furthermore planned different projects to reorganize it in a more convenient way, according to his judgement, gathering all the scattered books and placing them somewhere else. Said projects instead of being realized, were a complete failure; large expenses were incurred to pay the salaries of the foreign librarian, many books were lost, and the work done since 1857 nullified ordering that the books be packed and stored in the building which is now the National Museum, in the upper floor of the Monoliths hall and in the kitchens of the former convent of "La Enseñanza". The University building was occupied by the Department of Fomento (Improvements).

V

The Republic was reestablished in the year 1867 and on November 30th a decree was published creating the much desired National Library, often planned, almost organized in the University building and suppressed, as we have seen, by the Austrian Archduke, who notwithstanding his illustration and love for the books, paid more attention to the brilliancy of his court, to the ceremonial of vain and pompous social affairs, to the wines for the Palace cellars, to the China-ware and bronzes of the dining rooms and to the rich liveries of his servants, than to an establishment not only useful but worthy of his Empire.

The Secretary of Justice and Public Instruction of Mr. Juárez in 1867, who was

Judge Antonio Martínez de Castro, a few days after having taken possession of his post, signed the aforesaid decree, appointed



Lic. D. Antonio Martínez de Castro

Judge José María Lafragua and doctor José María Benítez Director and Librarian respectively, and selected the ancient church of San Agustín for the Library.

This church abandoned during the French Intervention, had been acquired during the

Reform period by Mr. Antonio Escandón to devote it once more to catholic services, but the Government entered again in possession, because it was given in payment of a $ 80.000 fine imposed on Mr. Escandón on account of the services he rendered to the *Intervention* and to the Empire of Maximilian.

The first difficulty of furnishing a place for the Library having been overcome, it was necessary to get funds to begin the expensive works to fit the church to its new destination.

«The church flooded and closed for some time past — a writer of those days states — presented, within, the appearance of a ruin and the courtyard was a complete mire that infected the most centrical and beautiful part of the city. The cleaning and maintainance expenses required big funds, and Mr. Martínez de Castro thought that it could be convenient to devote to that effect the amount coming from the legal taxes corresponding to the Government in conection with the late Eustaquio Barron's will. After this point was settled, the staff of employees was approved, according to the faculties of the Government, and there being the necessary building and

funds to create the Library, the idea which was firstly considered impossible to be realized, had as definite and positive form.

Mr. Martínez de Castro also conceived the happy idea that all the necessary works should be done by Mexicans so as to encourage and recompense laborious people, and to be later in condition of priding ourselves, when the building be finished, over the improvement of the fine arts among us, and of our good taste in the decoration.

Notwithstanding the opinion of the writer above quoted, the selected building though beautiful and magnificent, had among other inconveniences, the lack of good light and ventilation and its being exceedingly cold during the winter time.

Several drawings and plans together with the respective projects were presented to the Government to fit up the building and to change, as much as possible, the church appearance that it had. The project of Messrs. Vicente Heredia and Eleuterio Méndez, Architects, alumni of the National Academy of Fine Arts, was accepted. On December 31st. 1867, the general estimate was approved and the works began on January 13th, 1868. It

was decided to provide the Librarian with a good house to live. The carpentry works were in charge of Mr. Antonio Franco, and the iron works were contracted with Mister Teodoro Flores, two honest and skilful artisans who had made their reputation and fortune after long years of work.

The first estimated amounted to $ 67.314, but after the rebulding began, it was found that the following expenses were necessary: in the main and lateral fronts, and in the statues to be placed outside of the building, $ 20.000; in sixteen plaster statues for the interior, $ 10.000; in the allegorical paintings, $ 25.000; in the removing of the lantern of the cupola, $ 4.000; in a garden with two fountains, seats, etc., $ 10.000. Though we could not ascertain what were the total expenses up to the date of the Library's inauguration, we can say that there were much larger than estimated, notwithstanding the fact that two items were suppressed: $ 25 000 value of paintings not made and $ 10.000 value of a marble pavement which they had planned to lay, this project being abandoned, because the writers and newspapermen of the time called the attention to the fact that it was a great mistake

to put that pavement which was cold and unhealthy in a place where the readers should remain for long time, where it was dangerous to light stoves and where the sun scarcely passed through high windows. Nor with mats, carpets, or expensive stoves would it had been possible to give a hygienic temperature for the readers.

The old church of St. Augustin's monks had the form of a Latin cross vithin a rectangle, its longitude being from North to South. They were twelve chapels within the space between the cross and the whole perimeter, and two transepts at each side of the central arch. The measurement of the central nave, including the choir was 64 meters long, and 12.21 meters wide, between the pilasters which divided the roof. The height of the key-stone of the archs was 24.14 meters. The vault which covered the cross was cannon shaped by six archs. On the transept there was a cupola, its height being, without considering the lantern, 35.22 meters and the diameter 13.40 meters. The central nave was divided in two parts: One composed by the arches which were the entrance to the chapels; and the other, by the windows opening

on the first story, and the vault had under the lunettes elliptic bull's-eye windows which formed the lighting of the second story. Considering its vertical and horizontal lines, the form and distribution of its supports, the style of the church was the one originated at Lombardy, between the end of the VI century and the begining of the VII, a model of it being the famous and notable church of Pavía. «In the latter, like in the former — states the writer we are quoting — the supports may be seen formed by groups of pilasters that start from the floor and receive the vaults, enlarging the architectural order proportions, cutting the horizontal lines of the inferior stories. The order is the Roman-Doric with some Renaissance details. The church, burnt out on 1689, was rebuilt during the Renaissance period.»

In fitting the building for a library, they tried to preserve the prevailing style of architecture, making only the absolutely necessary changes, because that style was the most appropiate on account of its severity and classic beauty.

VI

The work of fitting it up covered more than fifteen years, and during that time three Directors were successively appointed, Judge José María Lafragua in 1867, Judge Joaquín Cardoso in 1875, and Mr. José María Vigil in 1880.

From 1868 until his death, Mr. José María Benítez was the Librarian, as he had previously been in the defunct University. He was a persevering and competent man who personally used his influence with Mr. Juárez so that the shelves and library belonging to the cathedral should be transferred to the "Third Order Chapel" annexed to San Agustín church. That library had been used by the public while the inauguration of the large one, or day-library, could be held, and was

destined later on for the night service, an assortment of books previously made, different to those which had formed the library of the Metropolitan Basilica.

On April 12th. 1869, Mr. Benítez presented an interesting report as to the total number of available volumes in the Library. Up to its closing by Maximilian, it had about 90.964 volumes. Later on, the following had been added: 10.210 from the cathedral; 867 from the Carmen convent of the Desert; 11.695 from the Jesuits (without considering those hidden by them); 60 obtained by donation and 2.835 by purchase, the total amount being 116.631 volumes. Notwithstanding, there really were 104.337 volumes, because according to Mr. Benítez' report, before the closing up of the Library when it was located in the University building, the Assistant Director, Mr. Lino Ramírez, delivered several books to the parties and with the purpose hereafter described: 50 volumes on Arithmetic and Algebra to Mr. José María Andrade's bookstore for ther sale; 50 volumes to the Department of Justice and Public Instruction, to be distributed as premiums; 86 to the «Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística» (Mexi-

can Society of Geography and Statistics) with a superior order to that effect; 396 sold to Messrs. R.....; 832 taken back by the Department of Fomento, among those which it has previously donated; 136 purchased by several parties; 92 returned to Father Morandi, as per order received from the Department; 10.652 proceeding from the old library and which it was thought, were lost.

The total number of boxes containing the books for the National Library were 1.120 on April 1869, of which 930 were stored in the upper floor of the actual monoliths hall in the National Museum, 190 in a store-room in San Agustín.

The aforesaid data show Mr. Benítez' honesty and care as Librarian, because the Director could pay but little attention to the Library on account of his duties as Secretary of State, and Dr. Benítez personally looked after the public who used to attend the provisional Library opened in the chapel of the «Tercer Orden de San Agustín».

Mr. Manuel Payno wrote on May 1869: The small Library is very far from presenting an imposing character, but we have to

confess that, though the shelves are very old and its decoration very simple, the walls being only painted with lime, order and cleanness exists which excuses for the moment the ornaments and other elegant details which are always missed and really necessary in a building like this. Mr. Benítez' constancy and laboriousness have overcome the obstacles, and have obtained that the books belonging to the old library of the cathedral, to the late Dr. Arrillaga and to the important collection of Mr. Juan Sánchez y Navarro, be put in order for public service. Furthermore, Messrs. Lafragua and Mariscal have acquired some modern works already placed at the readers' disposal. Good tables and benchs, enough light, agreable temperature and a good number of books, are the advantages at present found in the small Library, opened daily with few interruptions, which can be visited by all classes.

After the death of Messrs. Lafragua and Benítez, Mr. Joaquín Cardoso was appointed Director, as we have already stated, but during the five years he remained in office he did but very little for the establishment, though he was a man of great intelligence

and enlightenment, perhaps on account of the small resources he disposed of, because those given by the Government were devot-

Lic. D. Joaquín Cardoso
Second Director of the National Library

ed to the expensive work of repairing and fitting the building, a slow work by its own nature and more yet by the poverty of the Public Treasure and the efforts made by the contractors not to finish except after

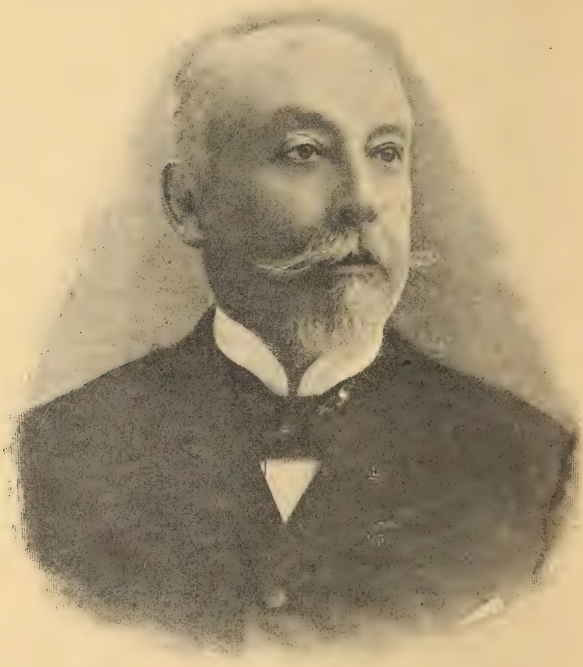
several years. A remarkably trait of Mister Cardoso was his punctuality in attending office, his great efforts to compel the employees to do the same, and his great care to avoid that the books were lost, soiled or distroyed by the readers.

VII

The National Library was solemnly inaugurated on April 2nd, 1884—the anniversary of the capture of Puebla by General Porfirio Diaz in 1867—General Manuel González being President of the Republic and Judge Joaquín Baranda Secretary of Justice and Public Instruction. The latter did all in his power to promptly finish the fitting and repairing, and to open an establishment so urgently asked for by the public and by the press.

Some days before, the invitations, signed by the Secretary of Justice and Public Instruction, were distributed and at ten o'clock, the same day, the President accompanied by some of the members of his Cabinet was received with due honors in the vast and elegant reading room, where an important attendance

was gathered; there were the Ministers from England, the United States, France and Italy;



Lic. D. Joaquín Baranda

Minister of Justice and Public Instruction at the time of inauguration of the National Library

the Mayor and some members of the City Council, the Governor of the Federal District, the directors of the establishments of

public instruction, deputies, members of the Presidents' staff, artists, writers, newspapermen and a great number of ladies, all of whom wished to take part in that memorable event.

The programme was pleasant and appropiate, on account of the musical selections and the literary papers read. Director José María Vigil being unable to personally present his report, owing to poor health due to the task he had imposed upon himself in order to have the Library ready for its inauguration, Mr. Julio Zárate read said report. Among the poets, the most celebrated was Mr. Guillermo Prieto, each strophe of his beautiful composition, an ode, being interrupted by storms of applause.

The building had on that day an imposing appearance. The courtyard which is now a garden, was limited by a balustrade supported by stone columns, upon which several statues were placed, representing the following persons: Mr. Manuel Carpio, the popular poet; Mr. Manuel Eduardo Goroztiza, the dramatic author; Mr. Francisco Manuel Sánchez de Tagle, the inspired bard; Mr. Francisco Javier Clavijero, the classic historian; Mr.

Hernando Tezozomoc, the ancient Indian chronist; Judge Jose Fernando Ramirez, the erudite bibliographer; Mr. Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, the historiographer from Tezcuco; Mr. Lucas Alamán, one of our famous literateurs; Friar Manuel Crisóstomo Nájera, the eminent philologist; Mr. Bernardo Couto, the elegant humanist; Netzahualcoyotl, the Indian poet; Judge Manuel de la Peña y Peña, the distinguished writter on Jurisprudence; Mr. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, the famous antiquarian; Mr. José Antonio Alzate, the learned priest; Mr. José Joaquín Pesado, the poet; Mr. Leopoldo Río de la Loza, the illustrious chemist; Judge José María Lafragua and Mr. Joaquín Cardoso, literateurs and Directors of the Library; Friar Manuel de Navarrete, the distinguished writer, and Judge José Mariano Veytia, the historian.

Mr. José María Vigil describes in a few expressive lines how the old San Agustín church had been fitted for a library. «A very beautiful ir on balustrade — he writes — forms the entrance of the hall, paved with marble of different colors and closed up by the vault of the ancient choir, supported on each side

by ten elegant columns. In front of the balustrade there is a cedar and mahogany door, artistically carved, this being the gate to the principal reading room, a large nave of about fifty one meters long, thirteen wide and thirty five high — twelve high columns distributed at each side support the vault arches, said columns being tied by a double stone frieze which completes the architectural decoration, giving way to the glassed windows which light the room. The arch of the ancient chapels are opened in the intercolumnation at the height of seven and a half meters. The chapels form two lateral naves and now, having been communicated each other, form galleries of eight small departments with lower roofs that end in the transept, the height of this being the same one of the nave, thus forming eight chapels more.

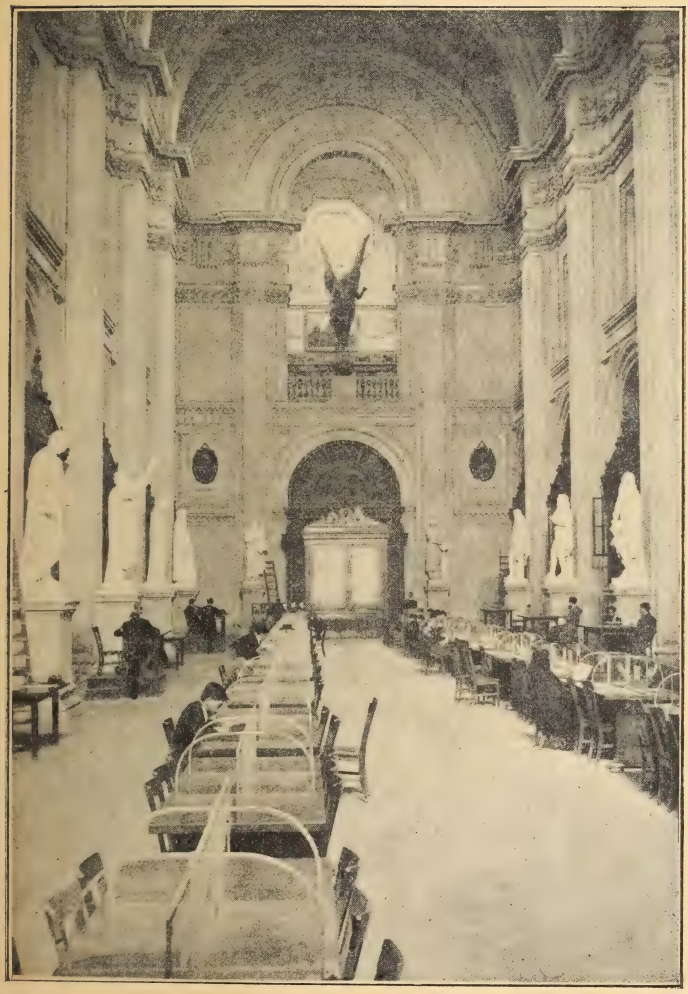
«Fifteen cedar shelves close the arches of the chapels and the transepts, each shelf being divided in three parts, and their numbering being continued inside, the groups being lettered. The books thus placed, according to subjects, are very easy to handle. Two chapels are devoted to History; two, to Literature; two, to Jurisprudence; one, to Philo-

sophy and other to Medical sciences, etc.; each book bearing in accordance with the organization system, the number of the shelf,

Interior view of one of the book departments of the National Library

the number of the box and the number of the book.

«On the background there is a large stained glass window in the center of which and upon a balustrade, is a Mexican eagle with outstretched wings, surmounted by the national emblem. Opposite to the window and upon the main entrance, there is an arch of consi-



Interior view of the National Library of México

derable height, which is the front of the ancient choir. In the center of this arch a big statue representing *Time* in a flying attitude may be seen having at its feet a black sphere which marks the hours of the clock. At each side of the entrance there are two bas-reliefs: one of President Benito Juárez who decreed the establishment of the National Library, and another of Minister of Justice, Antonio Martínez de Castro, who authorised said decree.»

There are in the main reading room sixteen big statues placed «upon high pedestals that complete the severe decoration of the nave» and which were made by the Mexican artists: Calvo, Noreffa, Islas, Cano, the Miranda brothers, Fernández, Schultz, Guerra, Revueltas, Bellido and Paredes.

In the selection of the statues, not only the personal merits of men were considered, but according to Mr. Vigil's report, it was resolved to look for those who had left to mankind the gift of their intellectual works, and «had sensibly influenced universal progress, personifying, we may say, the most important point of its historical development.

Though the task was a difficult one owing

to the small number of statues, the man who conceived the idea succeeded: Walky is there to recollect the mysterious Eastern countries; Confucius, the very ancient Chinese civilization; Isaiah and Homer, the poetic and epic poetry of two great peoples; Plato and Aristotle, condensing the highest philosophical ideas; Cicero representing Roman eloquence; Virgil, poetry; St. Paul, propagation of christianity; Origines, incarnating thoughts of high philosophical conception "with a light of a divine faith;" Dante, representing the struggle between the old and modern elements; the Mexican Alarcón, creating a new theatre; Copernicus, Descartes, Cuvier and Humboldt, the great apostles of science whom the whole world admires on account of their great works.

VIII

During the last days of November 1880, Mr. José María Vigil was appointed Director, and he could immediately observe that he was receiving a valuable library because of the number of volumes and their quality, but that with exception of the books put to the public service in the place designated to that effect, the majority of them were kept in boxes piled up in the muddy sacristy of the old chapel of the "Tercer Orden".

Therefore, Mr. Virgil's first idea was to adopt a simple but efficient system of classification to facilitate the handling of a library that should increase the number of its volumes, and which without said condition could

not be but «a heap of useless books, or at least of books difficult to consult».

The choice of a system of classification for such a large Library was not an easy matter, as may be imagined, if we take into consideration that there were, since the XV century, several systems that although they looked very advantageous theorically, were not at all practical. Moreover, as a distinguished bibliophile wisely said «before commencing to organize a library, a plan must be adopted which will be suitable not only for the books, but for each country, and once adopted, it is necessary to always follow it. Therefore, a librarian's duty is to establish the system in such a manner, that his successor may follow it without difficulty and without interrupting the use of the library».

It is also necessary not to confound the installation with the classification, because if the latter shows the shelves where the books are kept, it is indifferent that their placing be made according to size, dates, subjects or authors, because to act otherwise only loses space in the shelves.

When Mr. Vigil was appointed Director, the classification proposed by Mamur in his

work «Draft of a New Bibliographic System of Human Knowledge» was widely adopted, and therefore Mr. Vigil accepted it, making only some necessary modifications. In the beginning he approved ten general divisions as follows: Ist. Introduction to Human Knowledge; 2nd. Theology; 3rd, Philosophy and Pedagogy; 4th. Jurisprudence; 5th. Mathematics, Physical and Natural Sciences; 6th. Medicine; 7th. Arts and crafts; 8th. Philology and Fine Arts; 9th. History and Auxiliary Sciences, and 10th. Literary and critical miscellany, and periodicals. This last division formed later on part of the first division. The subdivisions can be seen in one of the appendixes (1).

This plan selected, Mr. Vigil proceeded immediately to execute it with an un limited assiduity and an intelligency worthy of his talents that could only be appreciated by men experienced in this kind of work.

Still the work, as Mr. Vigil stated in a report «could not be completed while the main reading room was not finished, because there were more than 800 boxes stored con-

(1) See Appendix No. 2.

taining books since 1867, the arrangement of which was impossible before the condition above referred to was filled». Finally the fitting of the reading room ended in November 1882; it was then necessary to begin a laborious and careful research that presented difficulties of another kind. The books had been packed without any order, and some months were needed to gather the works which were after distributed according to the divisions accepted and the places previously assigned. By these means it was possible to fix up the great number of incomplete works of which note was taken in alphabetical order, and it may be said that the number of destroyed books was not as large as was feared, considering that they remained for many years in wet and unventilated stores.

Mr. Vigil's continous and careful research, in which he showed the patient qualifications of a good librarian, is a praiseworthy labor, because it was a hard task that brought him two or three diseases, which imperrilled his life; in said task he displayed all his scientific and literary erudition, and if he incurred in errors they may be attributed to our natural debility, but not to lack of care and good

will, because all qualifications above mentioned were characteristic of him, specially during those days. Mr. José María de Agreda y Sánchez, a highly distinguished Mexican

D. José María Vigil

Third Director of the National Library

bibliophiler and assistant Director of the National Library helped Mr. Vigil very much, with great activity and intelligence, in the labor of looking up books to complete works and in making the first general classification and numbering books according to subjects, as soon as they were taken out from the boxes and placed provisionally on

tables. He also helped very much in the distribution lately made with the purpose of gathering the books, relating to one topic, so as to put them in their respective places. Mr. de Agreda y Sánchez' labor in connection with the forming of the catalogues is also highly commendable.

Mr. Vigil's task is praiseworthy not only for the time he devoted to it, but for his care in seeing that the title-pages were extracted, the name of the cities and typographies accurately transcribed, and the books, dates and number of volumes of each work established in catalogues. To this effect it was necessary to carefully revise the titles and the copies made, to frequently consult bibliographical works so as to ascertain whether some books were finished, because it often happens that only one or more volumes are published without printing the last ones, and these works must be placed among the completed ones.

All of the thousands of books that now form the Library, those belonging to the defunct convents, those of the cathedral, those of the University, those given by the Departments of the Government, those acquired either by purchase, donation or ex-

change, passed through his hands, some for study when the subject was difficult for classification, others to convince himself of the title-pages accuracy, that is to say the printing house, place and date of publication. All of the respective cards were read by him in order to revise and correct them, and he did not suspend this ardous and unpleasant task (ardous and unpleasant on account of its being appreciated only by those who undertake it) until he became almost completely blind, owing to cataracts in both eyes. Once cured, he recommenced his labors with the same interest and patient care he had had before, undismayed either by the unfair criticisms made to the classification he adopted, or by his old age, his physical and moral sufferings in his last days, when almost dying, he did not wish to give up his labors as Director of the Library.

And to better appreciate the merit of Mr. Vigil's labor, it is necessary to consider that he was in the meantime a professor firstly of Philosophy and later of Literature in the National Preparatory School, rendered extensive reports, wrote books as important as the fourth volume of «México á través de

los Siglos»; compiled anthologies as «Poetisas Mexicanas» and yet he found time to walk through public gardens, to talk with his friends and pupils about artistic, literary or erudite topics, to read the new books published and to preside at the meetings of the Mexican Academy of Language, corresponding to the Spanish Academy, or to assist at the meetings at the ancient Liceo Hidalgo.

That venerable and learned old gentleman deserves yet a higher praise than this, and should somebody criticise us for his apology in this brief description of the National Library, they must consider that it was absolutely fair to do so. Whatever its defaults may be, the establishment now exists owing not only to the support granted to it by the Government but to Mr. Vigil. He organized and established the Library and made the classification. He left to his successors almost 200.000 volumes, including the duplicate copies which are now arranged in a very acceptable manner; he created the official Bulletin of the Library, where notices regarding daily attendance are published, stating the number of readings, books used, etc., list of copyrights granted, lists of books ac-

quired with the establishment's funds, by donation or exchange; he left eleven printed volumes *in folio* containing the catalogues and supplements of the day and night libraries.

IX

The volumes that now constitute the Library are not many in each subject because, as it may be easily understood, the majority of them proceeding from religious convents, almost two thirds of the total number refer to theological matters and there are fifteen, twenty or more duplicate copies of some works.

«I am far from thinking — Mr. Vigil wrote en 1882 — that theology is a dead science which does not occupy the thoughts, only the 85 periodicals published in Paris on this subject, as well as the large number of works on the same matter, published abroad, would be enough to prove that this opinion was baseless. Moreover, I believe that the very

important books we have must be kept in a Library like the National, there being some real bibliographic jewels, at least as a monument of intellectual activity during a large series of centuries; but in the me antime it is necessary to recognize that the spirit of our century, the progress made every day by mankind and the urgent necessity for extending public instruction, for offering to studious people all learning fountains, make it indispensable to develope other divisions, as much as possible.»

The late Director was entirely right in his opinion, which proved not only his respect for the past but his advanced ideas. He, therefore, increased as much as he could, the number of modern works, without despising a theological stock that some people used to see with disdain, not understanding its importance. The philologist in the polyglot texts, the psychologist to penetrate the spirit of religious beliefs, the literateur to judge of beautiful works and eloquence that have distinguished the popes and christian orators, and the historian to investigate the origins, customs, laws and evolution of all nations' beliefs, will find ample data in the precious

collections of bibles in the important series of commentators of sacred hermeneutica of liturgy, of councils and synods, of patrologic compilations and of writers of speculative scholastic, dogmatic, catechetical, parenetic and ascetic theology, as well as in the works of polemics and heterodoxy that may be found in our National Library.

By the number of volumes, General History and specially America's follows in importancy Theology, there being a large part devoted to ecclesiastical and Mexican history, largely increased after the opening of the Library. Then comes Jurisprudence, giving a good number of volumes the canonical, Roman and Spanish laws; Literature is represented by very valuable editions of Greek and Latin classics, grammars and dictionaries which show the importance given by our forefathers to this kind of study, though a considerable lack of books relating to the Indian languages can be observed.

Later on we find in the following order, Philosophy, where scholastic works prevail; Fine Arts with several important works; Mathematics, Physical, Natural and Medical sciences. The number of these volumes re-

quire a large increase, if we consider the great advancements made in this subject during the last years. There are good collections of Mexican and foreign newspapers and their number would be larger, had the printers and editors of national publications obeyed the provisions of the law dated 1857.— There are many foreign publications that undoubtedly must be yet received in the Library.

There are not so many manuscripts as one may suppose and those in stock come from the libraries of the closed monasteries, where the friars left so many treasuries, regarding national history and languages, but if they are few, they are very valuable, there being among others the precious volume of the songs of the Nahuatl language, the only Indian anthology that we have from the time previous to the Spanish conquest, the compilation of Mexican preachings, copious fountain of Nahuas words, principally to understand the nature of said language ; a series of important documents about the expulsion of the Jesuits from the kingdom of New Spain; written copies of Mange's and Tamaron's works and others of interest for our colonial

history; the complete archives of the extinct University of Mexico where a valuable stock of dates and informations may be found to be used in the bibliographies of all notable men who were born or lived in Mexico since the XVI century; several pamphlets, reports and papers from the Government and very important for the history of cultivations, industries and arts, during the Viceregal period, and some volumes containing theological and other writings, as well as the literary works from the colleges and convents.

Among the donations and purchases of libraries that have increased the number of volumes of the National Library, the following are worthy of mention: the libraries given to the establishment by Messrs. José María Lafragua, Antonio Mier y Celis and Guillermo Prieto and those purchased from Mr. Angel Núñez Ortega's widow and from Mr. Andrés Clemente Vázquez.

In 1876, Mr. Antonio Escalante, executor of Mr. Lafragua's will delivered about 2.000 volumes that formed the collection of Mexican works, they being a part of the Library of that distinguished writer. This gift is notable owing to the numberless pamphlets on

Mexican history, Geography, Politics and Laws, gathered by said gentleman and which are carefully enumerated in the catalogue of the National Library.

On April 1900, the Library belonging to Mr. Mier y Celis, a capitalist was received. It has 9.350 volumes, very well bound and in a very good condition, on the following subjects: Literature, History, Canonical law and Natural Sciences. Mr. Mier y Celis' gift deserves more praise because he has been the only wealthy Mexican who has done such a liberal action.

Mr. Guillermo Prieto is not less worthy of praise. His library of 4.931 volumes was delivered on November 1900 and these books show perfectly the inclinations, studies and labors of the inspired and popular poet.

The collections purchased of Mr. Andrés Clemente Vázquez on April 1900 has 5.880 volumes and the collection obtained one or two years before from Mr. Angel Núñez Ortega's widow, 1.170. They both have no equal in their kind. Mr. Vázquez' library is one of the largest in the world relating to chess. Mr. Ortega's is not so large, but is invaluable because it is one of the few that

contain works on Mexican topics written by foreigners in French, Italian, English, German and Dutch, specially regarding the unfortunate Archduke Maximilian.

Mr. Núñez Ortega's stay in Europe, principally in Belgium as representative of the Republic and his inclinations to the bibliography and studies about Mexico, gave him the occasion to form such a curious and interesting collection, where books written by national authors and translated to foreign languages may be found.

The purchase price of this worthy library was $ 2.208.53. We shall finish this brief report about tbe books contained in the National Library, mentioning the invaluable collection of incunabula among which there are the "Tractatus de Censuris" written by Archbishop St. Antonine, without expressing the dated place of printing, but which probably was published on 1471, and "Sermonario" of Robert Lilio printed in Venice on May 20th 1472. This two works are the oldest kept in the Library and they are in perfect condition.

REVERENDO DOMINO archiepiscopo florentino beati antonini archiepiscopi florentini ordinis predicatorum uiri uere usque pagine pretissimi. Tractatus super censuras. Feliciter incipit ⁊

Excōicatio dicit excusio a cōmone. sicut aūt ē triplex cōio fidelium. s. i cōmunicatōe ut loqla cibo. salutatōe ⁊ bo. i sacrōz susceptōe. i bono rū spūaliū participatōe. q̄ fiūt in ecclia. iuxta illud psal. participes me fac deus oīm timentū. Sic triplex pōt dici excōio aliis obmissa. Et pria ē excōio maior q̄ etiā dr anathēa. ⁊ excludit a p vida tripliciter cōmone de hac. iii. q. iii. engeltrudā. ⁊ ii. q. iii. sic aplī. ⁊ c. nihil. Secūda ē excōio minor. q̄ excludit a cōmone ⁊ participatōe sacrōz passiua tātū. Ex. 10. de hig. ut de cle. ex. mi. c. fi celebrat. ⁊ de hac ii. q. iii. cum excōicato. ⁊ iii. q. iii. engeltru dā. Tertia ē excōio data a deo. s. īfincta p quodlz mortale. ⁊ de hac ii. q. iii. au ch. ista g° de cē suris ecclasticis q̄rta ps sex titulos habz. in prio tractabit de excōione maiori. ī. 2o de mīori in iii. de mīdcō. in. iiii. de suspēsione. ī v. de irregularitate. ī vi. de penis ī genere. Quātū ad primū sciēdū. q̄ excōio maior q̄nz īferr ab hoīe siue a iudice. ⁊ qz ista īferr ꝑ variis ⁊ īnūeris cāibus ēt iusticis. ideo ponit ī pūt cā9 ipsi9. q̄nz īferr a iur ptibus p cōstōes vz smodales alic9 dioces. uel. puīciales fcās. ī cōcilio. puīciali. uel p legatū alic9. puīcie q̄ nō extēdunt ad alia loca. s. extra. puīcia uel di oces. ⁊ qz b uariatur ēt multis mōis. qz quot dioc. tot quodā mō cōstōes. ō ipe ēt obmittūt q̄nz uero infertur excōio a iure cōi seu p cōstōes fcās ī cōcilio vbibus uel a sūmis pōtificibus q̄ astrīgūt ⁊ ligāt ubiq; terraꝝ fideles. q̄rū quedā hūr ī corpe iuris. Cū bo. de sen. ex. ī prī°. xxx. nūerat excōiōes collcās ex decretis ⁊ decretalibz. io. uero an. ī c. eos de sen. ex. li. vi. ī gl nūerat. xxvii. q̄ hūr ī ipō vi. li ⁊ idē ī cle. illas. de sen. ex. li. vi nūerat. liii. q̄ hūr ī cle. quedam alie fūt p extraua. diuersoz sūmoz pōtificū. ⁊ ītē q̄dā alie fūt q̄ ānuati fiūt a sū° pōtifice in curia cōtra quasdā personas seu cōmūitates q̄dā uicia ut infra patebit. ig̃r circa istā materiā ex cōiōis maiori sic. pcedet. prio ponentur cā9. ppt quos ſcurrit excōi° maioz quoz q̄dā sūt aplī ce sedi reseruati q̄tū ad absolōz. Sc° tractabī de ipā excōiōe. tertio de ipius absolōe. īponē° āt ipos casus excōis iur pn9 aget. de ille ī q̄b9 frequētius ſcurrit cū aliq̄li declīatōe. Fz notata p doct. ⁊ exīū de aliis breuissime expediet. demū ponēt de uerbo ad uerbū q̄dā extrauag. ⁊ ipe. p cessiū q̄ fit ānuatiz in curia per papā cōtnēs ptes excōicatiōs.

Núm. 1

First page of the *Tractatus de Consulis* by the Archbishop San Antonino. 1471?

Sed aīa beata p ſui corpis reſumptōem habebit pfectioē eēndi moduz ḡ̃ mō q omis ps bét pfectioem modū eēndi ī toto ḡ̃ ſepata iō hēbi pfectō rem nalez ūtuté ḡ̃ mō. Preterea nā recta nō appetit nāliter habē aliquid q̄ habito ñ fieret pfectioz p̄m modū eēndi nec p̄m uirtutem. ß ſi cuiuſlibz aīe beate eſt nā recta ⁊ quilibet nāliter appetit reſumptōem corporis ꝑ̄ḡ p illam reſumptōem quilibet fiet pfectioz p̄m eēndi modū uł̄ p̄m uirtutem Perfectioē ḡ̃ habebūt aīe eēndi modū ⁊ uirtuté poſt reaſſūptōem corpoz ḡ̃ añ ⁊ p ꝺſequés maioē beatitudiné. Ex aūt aīa ī corpore corruptibili ipſe ctioē béat ſuam opatōem nālem ḡ̃ ſepata hoc eſt p accidēs. ſ. rōe corrupti bilitatis corporis. Quia ut dr̄ ſapie ix. Corp⁹ qđ corrūpit aggrauat animaz Sed ut dicit Aug⁹. xij. ſup Gen. uerſus finem. Cum aīa hoc corp⁹ iam nō aīale ſed p futurā ꝺmutatōem ſpūale recepit. pfectū hēbit nature ſue mo dum obediens ⁊ imperans uiuificata ⁊ uiuificans tā ieffabili facilitate ut ſit ei glie qđ fuit ſarcine. Erit itaq; m illa gñali reſurrectōe ſupadmiráda leti cia ⁊ iocūditas amicoz dei qui ex affectu expient ḡ̃ fructuoſum eſt ꝑpter xp̄m quoſcūq; ſubire labores. Econūſo nēo damnati miſeri ex pene acerbi tate ognoſcét quāta eſt ſtultícia quāta demētia negligere aīam ⁊ fouē corp⁹ otēnē celum ⁊ querē mūdū reſiſtē deo ⁊ ſeruire diabolo Sollicite igit̄ pro uidēdum é ut ab ipſis īpiis ſepati p bona opa ⁊ ueraz penitētiā ánumerari ualeam⁹ angelicis choris ordinibuſq; ſanctoz collaudāteo ⁊ bñdicétes deū p imortalia ſeculoz ſecula Amen. ~

Mendelinus ego gentis ognomine ſpiere:
Roberti haec caſte purgata uolumia preſſi:
Sedis apoſtolice Romano praeſide Sixto
Magnanimo ⁊ uenetum Nicolao pncipe Truno

M.cccclxxij. xx. quintilis.

Núm. 2

A page of the *Sermonario* of Roberto Lilio, printed at Florence in the year 1472

X

On January 31st, 1885, General Porfirio Díaz, President of the Republic, issued the Regulations of the National Library of Mexico. These Regulations contain sixteen articles, stating the days and hours for the Library to be opened; the form of lending the books; the penalties for the readers who destroy the books by cutting engravings and pulling out or writing on the pages; the prohibition of taking books out of the building; the behaving inside not to interrupt reading with noise, conversations or anything else; the rules for the employees so that they be courteous and polite with the visitors and do not talk either with other employees or with the public, and in order to pay full attention to their duties; the manner in which the read-

ers can take notes, the visitors' obligation of depositing their personal books with the warden, who will have to form a list of all publications which appear in the Federal District and of which the printers must send copies according to the law so as to ask for those not sent; the provisions that none of the employees may leave the establishment during service hours without permission from the Director.

On May 22nd, 1893, after these Regulations were issued, a Library's night service was established in the old chapel of «Tercer Orden de San Agustín» adjoining the large building.

This new department was conveniently fitted up and duplicate books existing in the day department were sent there because the works therein and those from the ancient «Biblioteca Popular del 5 de Mayo» (5th May Popular Library) were not appropiate nor sufficient for the service, not only on account of their small number and subjects treated, but owing to their bad condition.

Mr. Vigil always endeavored to obtain that readers in the night department could have, although in a reduced number, books

about all different branches of human knowledge, but considering that probably the night readers would be workmen who would wish either to get instruction or rest, equipped the department with a large collection of books an arts and crafts, history, mathematics and natural sciences, literature and medicine, «selecting as many as possible written in Spanish without forgetting works of reference, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias and a large number of periodical publications...»

When the night department was inaugurated, it had 4 063 works in 6.940 volumes and 1.000 periodical publications making a total of nearly 8.000 volumes.

Since the inauguration of the day and night services in 1882 and 1893 respectively, a monthly statistic is published in the Bulletin stating the number of visitors in both departments and the books read by them. This statistic more or less accurate as all statistics of this kind are, has two disappointing items. First, that the number of readers which increased from 8.238 to 79.947 between 1882 and 1894, decreased to 63.863 in 1895; it went up again to 71.503 in 1896, and from

1897 a further decline may be observed which has given a minimum assistance of 33.720 in 1908 (1).

It is necessary to say that this number indicates day and night readers. Second, that the preferred books are those of amusing literature and that more periodicals and trifle works are consulted than those on sciences, arts or handicrafts.

We make this observation without trying to explain the fact satisfactorily. We leave to our sociologists the task of finding a solution to this problem so much more incomprehensible when the instruction has progressed as the result of peace.

During latter years the Library has enlarged its stock very much, acquiring several modern works either by exchange, donations or purchase, although not as many as it would had been convenient owing to the small amount estimated to that effect.

Notwithstanding, the expenses incurred by the Government in repair works are considerable. The rebuilding of the frontis piece and the western side of the chapel of "Tercer Orden" which presented a disagreeable appear-

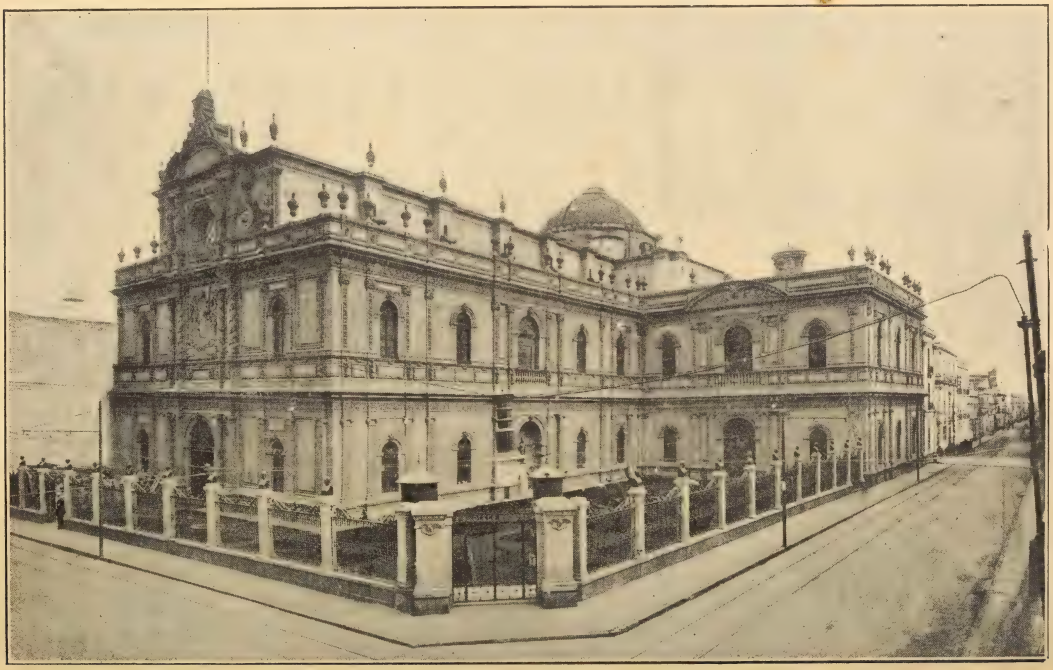
(1) See Appendix No. 4.

ance when compared with the main building cost $ 200.000; work on the roofs of the old chapels in the large Library in order to use them to place more books, $12.111,99; metallic shelves in said chapels which may contain about 98.000 volumes, $40.444,78; new furniture for the day reading department, $16.140,59 and some other lately spent to clean and repair the Director's house, now used as Direction and publications' office; to clean and fit up the toilet department and to rebuild the old stair which goes to the ancient choir where 20.000 duplicate volumes are kept; to place a wooden screen in the entrance of the day Library's hall; to change the marble and stone pavement in the same entrance for another of mosaic, and the reading room and chapel's parquetry for a new one; to put a wooden screen in the night department's entrance; to clean and paint the balaustrade on the north and west sides.

All these sums have been spent during Mr. José María Vigil's last years of administration—his death occurred on February 18th, 1909—and during Mr. Francisco Sosa's incumbency. He was appointed Director by the President of the Republic in the same

month, having taken possession of his post on March lst. 1909.

The present Director has done his best, considering the resources he disposes of, to purchase scientific works as well as those on arts and handicrafts; to improve the public service; to attend to readers' complaints and to comply with their applications, granting them more hygiene, and less troubles while they are reading; he has established econo mies in superfluous expenses and reorganized the staff; he has called the printers' attention to their legal duty to send to the Library two copies of each book they print; he has accomodated in the new departments of the chapels, the libraries donated by Messrs. Antonio de Mier y Celis and Guillermo Prieto, the one purchased from Mr. Andrés Clemente Vázquez, and those sent by the National School of Jurisprudence either incomplete or relating to matters different to the ones studied in said establishment; he has ordered the formation of a special catalogue of Mexican authors and foreigners who have written on Mexican topics, and is studying some other reforms for the improvement and betterment of our National Library.



The National Library

APPENDIX No. 1

Department of Justice and Public Instruction. —Second Section.—The President of the Republic has addressed me the following decree:

Know all men by these present:

That I, Benito Juárez, Constitutional President of the United States of Mexico, in virtue of the faculties granted to me, have issued the following decree:

Article 1. The National Library created by decrees dated October 26th, 1833, November 30th, 1846 and September 14th, 1857, will be established in the old church of St. Augustin.

Article 2. In addition to the books destined by said decrees, all those belonging to the convents and the library of the cathedral will be delivered to it.

Article 3. A night reading room for workmen will be established in the place where the library is now located, said department to be under supervision of the Library's Director. It will also be opened on feast days.

Article 4. All business in connection with the Library and the workmen's reading room will be treated by the Director with the Department of Public Instruction, who will control both establishments.

Article 5. The Director will draw up as soon as possible the Library and reading-room regulations, and will submit them to the Government.

Article 6. All previous decrees will be considered in force if they do not oppose the present.

Article 7. The employees of the Library and reading room will be:

A Director with.	$ 2.500.00
A Librarian	$ 1.500.00
Two Officers with $ 500 each . . .	$ 1.000.00
A paleographer	$ 500.00
Two clerks in charge of the books with $ 300.00 each	$ 600.00
A warden	$ 240.00
A servant	$ 200.00
General expenses	$ 600.00
A clerk in charge of the cabinet . .	$ 600.00
A doorman	$ 150.00
For the purchase and binding of books, subscription to newspapers, etc. per annum	$ 4.000.00
TOTAL. . . .	$ 11.890.00

Article 8. This amount will be taken from the fund destined for public instruction.

Article 9. It will be the duty of the cabinet's clerk to help in the Library's morning labors in such a way as stated in the interior regulations.

Article 10. All obligations imposed on printers by Article 4th. of the decree of September 14, 1857, will be made effective from to-day.

And for the fulfilment thereof, I hereby order it be printed, published and circulated.

Dated at the National Palace on November 30, 1867.—Benito Juárez.—To Mr. Antonio Martínez de Castro, Secretary of Justice and Public Instruction.

I communicate it to you for its accomplishment.

Independence and liberty.—November 30, 1867. —Martínez de Castro.

Official Newspaper, number 105. — December 2, 1867.

APPENDIX No. 2

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of cátálogue of the Nátionál Libráry

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IV.—Bibliology.
1.—*Printing.*
2.—*Book-printing and Binding.—Indexes of prohibited books.—Catalogues.*
3.—*Bibliography.*
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3.—*History of the Phoenicians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians and other ancient peoples.*

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B.—*History of the barbarians' emigrations in the first centuries of the christian era.*

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1.—*General treatises.*

2.—*Ecclesiastical history of different countries.*

3.—*History of the popes, cardinals and conclaves.*

4.—*History of the Inquisition.*

5.—*History of the Councils.*

6.—*History of the Clergy and the religious orders.*

7.—*History of the sacred places, cementeries, images, relics, miracles, legends, etc.*

8.—*History of the heresies and schisms.*

9.—*Ecclesiastical biography.*

10.—*Hagiography.*

11.—*Miscellany.*

VIII.—History of the Middle Age.

IX.—History of the Europe.

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2.—*National european history.*

A.—*History of Italy.*
B.—*History of Spain and Portugal.*
C.—*History of France.*
D.—*History of Germany.*
E.—*History of Low Countries.*
F.—*History of Sweden, Norway and Denmark.*
G.—*History of Hungary and Bohemia.*
H.—*History of Switzerland.*
I.—*History of Russia, Poland and modern Greece.*
J.—*History of England.*

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XI.—History of Africa.
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2.—*National American History.*
A.—*History of Mexico.*
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1st series.
2nd series.
3rd series.
4th series.
5th series.
6th series.
7th series.
8th series.
9th series.
10th series.

B.—*History of the United States of North America and Canada.*
C.—*History of Central and South America and of the West Indies.*
XIII.—History of Oceania.
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XVIII.—General biography.
Supplement to the Catalogue of history.

APPENDIX No. 3

Department of Justice and Public Instruction. —Second Section.—The President of the Republic has addressed me the following decree:

Know all men by these present:

That I, *Porfirio Díaz,* President of the Republic, in virtue of the authority granted to me by part 1st. of article 85th of the Constitution, have issued the following Regulations of the National Library of Mexico.

Article 1. The National Library of Mexico will be open daily from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m., with the exception of legal holydays, and April 2nd., anniversary of the Library's inauguration.

Article 2. Clerks whose duty it is to deliver books to the readers will be at their desk at least fifteen minutes before opening the Library.

Article 3. Readers will not be allowed to take books from the shelves, but they will state on an

appropiate ticket signed by them, the book they need.

Article 4. Tickets will be given only by one clerk, who will mark them with a progressive number, when they are asked for by the readers.

Article 5. Tickets will be presented to the clerks in charge of the books, who will deliver those asked for. When books are returned, tickets will be given back, so that they may be handed to the warden. No reader will be allowed to leave the building before delivering the ticket.

Article 6. Any person who destroys a book either cutting out engravings or pages, or writing on it, soiling it, etc., will be compelled to pay its invoice price according to regular prices in the catalogues of Mexico City's book-stores; but this payment will not grant him the property of the destroyed book, that will remain in the Library. If a destroyed book be a rare one or a manuscript, the amount of the indemnization will be established by an appraiser appointed by the Library's Director.

Article 7. No book will be given to any person guilty as per Article 6th.

Article 8. No book will be taken out of the Library.

Article 9. Clerks will, under their responsibility, endeavor to prevent destruction of books. No book will be given to persons presenting themselves without the respect due to a national establishment.

Article 10. Silence, so necessary in a place devoted to reading and study will not be interrupted either with noises, conversations or anything else.

Article 11. The employees will show readers all necessary courtesy, but in no case will engage in conversation with the readers, or among themselves, but will be attentive to their respective duties.

Article 12. Persons willing to write some notes will do so with pencil, and this will be furnished to them if required.

Article 13. Books belonging to visitors will be deposited with the warden who will give a check in exchange. This will be returned to the warden when visitors leave the building.

Article 14. No person will be allowed in the interior departments without previous notification to the employees who will accompany the visitor giving him all necessary information.

Article 15. The warden will draw up a list of all publications made in the Federal District which must be sent to the Library according to law, in order to ascertain those already sent, and those which must be asked for the Library.

Article 16. No employee may leave the establishment during service hours, without the previous consent of the Director.

And for the fulfilment thereof, I hereby order it to be printed, published and circulated.

Dated at the National Palace, January 31, 1885.

—*Porfirio Diaz.*—To Mr. Joaquín Baranda, Secretary of Justice and Public Instruction.

I communicate it to you for its accomplishment.

Liberty and Constitution. — Mexico, January 31, 1885.

Baranda.

APPENDIX No. 4

Notice of the number of readers at the National Library.

Years	Day	Night	Total
1882	—	—	8.238
1883	—	—	6.470
1884	—	—	11.959 (a)
1885	—	—	22.336
1886	—	—	30.013
1887	—	—	26.730
1888	—	—	26.207
1889	—	—	37.875
1890	—	—	40.324
1891	—	—	48.943
1892	—	—	61.216
1893	60.591	14.366 (b)	74.957
1894	57.596	22.351	79.947
1895	46.945	16.918	63.863
1896	51.621	19.882	71.503
1897	34.984	19.475	54.459
1898	32.135	18.754	50.889
1899	28.403	10.801 (c)	39.204
1900	25.310	12.247 (d)	37.557
1901	21.394 (e)	12.486	33.880
1902	23.515	15.444	38.959
1903	21.200	14.551	35.751
1904	24.393	15.213	39.606
1905	27.652	16.593	44.245
1906	27.819	15.446	43.265
1907	21.877	14.066	35.943
1908	20.786 (f)	12.934	33.720
1909	21.783	15.041	36.824

(a) Closed from January 20th to April 3rd.—(b) Opened on May 26th.—(c) Closed from July 27th.—(d) Opened on January 9th.—(e) Closed from November 1st to December 25th.—(f) Closed from December 18th.—These extraordinary closings were generally due to repairs.

APPENDIX No. 5

Estimates of expenses of the National Library

	Fixed daily salary	Annual amount
A Director	$ 9.00	$ 3.285.00
An Assistant Director . .	» 4.40	» 1.606.00
A Secretary.	» 4.15	» 1.514.75
An Officer	» 3.30	» 1.204.50
An Officer in charge of the Bulletin and other publications	» 3.30	» 1.204.50
One clerk in the exchange department.	» 2.75	» 1.003.75
Six clerks, in charge of the books at $ 547.50 each .	» 1.50	» 3.285.00
Ten other clerks at $ 657.00 each . . .	» 1.80	» 6.570.00
Two inspectors at $ 602.25.	» 1.65	» 1.204.50

Servants

A warden.	» 1.65	» 602.25
A porter	» 1.00	» 365.00
A gardener	» 0.81	» 295.65
A head servant.	» 1.00	» 365.00
Five servants at $ 310.25 .	» 0.85	» 1.551.25

Expenses

General office expenses, per month 180.00.	» 2.160.00
For purchase of books and subscriptions	» 5.000.00
For subsidies to new works, printing and binding.	» 10.000.00
For repairs and the works now in progress	» 20.000.00
Night Library light $ 72 per month .	» 864.00
Servants uniforms	» 734.00
TOTAL AMOUNT. . . .	$ 38.398.90

Fiscal year 1909-1910.

Works and authorities referred to in order to write this Essay.

Leyes y Reglamento para el arreglo de la Instrucción Pública en el Distrito Federal.—Impresa de orden y á costo de la misma Dirección.—En la Imprenta de la Dirección de Instrucción Pública, en la Casa de Pobres, por Agustín Guiol. Año de 1834. 1 vol. 16.°

Colección de Leyes y Decretos.—Publicados desde 1.° de Enero de 1844.—Edición del Constitucional.—México.—Imprenta en Palacio.—1851.—1 vol. 4.°, correspondiente á los años de 1844 á 1846.

El Archivo Mexicano.—Colección de Leyes, Decretos, Circulares y otros documentos.—Tomos III y IV.—México.—Imprenta de Vicente García Torres. Calle de San Juan de Letrán, n.° 3. 1857-1862. 2 vols. 4.°

Recopilación de Leyes, Decretos y Providencias de los Poderes Legislativo y Ejecutivo de la Unión.—México. 1867.—Imprenta del Gobierno. Tomo I. 1 vol. 4.°

Las Bibliotecas de México.—México. Imprenta del Gobierno, en Palacio, á cargo de José María Sandoval. 1869. Un folleto 4.° mayor, escrito por D. Manuel Payno.

Almanaque Estadístico de las oficinas y Guía de Forasteros para 1874, por Juan E. Pérez. Tercer año.—México.—Imprenta del Gobierno, en Palacio, á cargo de José María Sandoval. 1873. 1 vol. 4.°

Inauguración de la Biblioteca Nacional de México.—Abril 2 de 1884.—México. Imprenta de Ireneo Paz. 2.ª de la Independencia, n.° 2. 1884. 1 vol. 4.°

Discurso sobre el origen de las bibliotecas públicas en la República Mexicana, pronunciado por el C. Lic. Manuel Cruzado, al ingresar al seno de la Sociedad de Geografía y Estadística de México.—México. Oficina Tipográfica de la Secretaría de Fomento. Calle de San Andrés, n.° 15.—1890.—Un folleto 4.°

Inauguración de la Biblioteca Nocturna anexa á la Nacional.—Mayo 22 de 1893. México Oficina Tipográfica de la Secretaría de Fomento. Calle de San Andrés, n.° 15. 1893. Un folleto 4.°

Mr. José María de Agreda y Sánchez, our erudite friend has given us data and information to write this Historical Essay, and the Department of Finance has furnished the plans of the Library building, made by its order.

027. Gonzalez Obregon, L.
50972 The National Library of Mexico,
G643N 1833-1910.

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FACULTY OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

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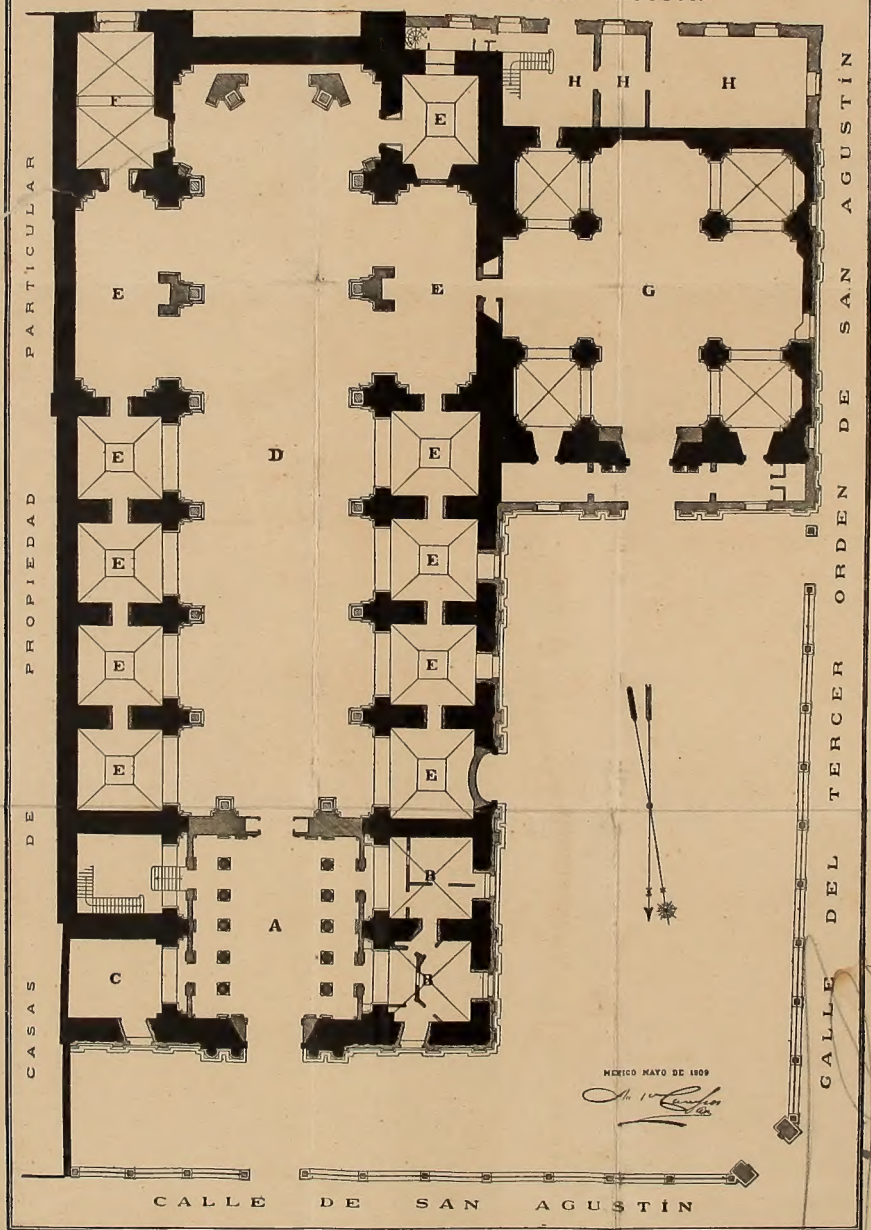

EXPLICACIÓN DEL PLANO

A Vestíbulo - B Habitación del Conserje - C Encuadernación - D Salon de Lectura - E Departamentos de Libros - F Subdirección y Secretaría - G Biblioteca Nocturna - H Dirección y Departamentos de Canje y Publicaciones